RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

MARCH, 1991

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

MEETING MINUTES

The February meeting of RNA went off without a hitch. Our chairperson, Vito Brunetti, opened the meeting at 7:30 pm and it was a full evening from then on.

We had a report of our finances by our treasurer Jack Rea. Then we had updates on several neighborhood concerns. The most recent development regarding 210 Ogden Avenue is that the Board of Adjustment had memoralized their resolution approving the continuation of the non-conforming use variance for 210 Ogden Avenue for the new stone and marble factory that has moved there.The membership voted to support those neighbors in the immediate vicinity of the factory who wish to fight this residential zone busting action. RNA voted to support this effort financially and politically.

We also discussed our annual flea market, and the possibility that an alternate location may be needed to hold this year's annual neighborhood event. The need for an alternate site is in case the City proceeds with its plans for the renovation of Riverview Park.

Then we opened nominations for the officers of the Association. The meeting closed with the monthly drawing of the 50/50. This month's winner was Mike Cioffi, who donated his winnings to the 210 Ogden Appeal Fund. Members then adjourned to enjoy refreshments provided by Gert Bogdan, Valerie Rea, Rose Scalzo, and Mrs. Marie Tuzzo.

Please join us at the March 8th meeting and participate in the election of officers and a discussion of the development plans for Christ Hospital.

Maria Tuzzo, Secretary

RNA ANNUAL ELECTIONS

Nominations for candidates for the offices of Riverview Neighborhood Association executive board were opened at the February meeting. They will remain open until the March meeting. Final nominations will be accepted at the beginning of the March meeting and then be closed for the voting. The candidates are listed below. Please remember that to be eligible to vote or run in this election, you must be a 1991 paid RNA member and live within the constitutional boundaries.

CANDIDATES FOR THE 1991 RNA EXECUTIVE BOARD

CHAIRPERSON:	VITO BRUNETTI
VICE CHAIRPERSON:	MARIE LANNE WAYNE MARINE ERNEST QUINTERO
SECRETARY:	MARIA TUZZO
TREASURER:	JACK REA DENNIS ELGRIM ERNEST QUINTERO
SGT. AT ARMS:	DENNIS ELGRIM MARIE LANNE JACK REA HARRY SIANO

TEEN NATION BATTLE ENDS

(Reprint from the Jersey Journal of Feb. 14, 1991)

A neighborhood's ability to resist an unwelcome intrusion has been shown by the apparent success of the battle against the Teen Nation disco that had been proposed for a site on Hoboken Avenue in Jersey City.

In this case, neighborhood groups mobilized to fight a

COMING EVENTS

1) RNA MEETING:

FRIDAY, March 8, at 7:30 PM

AT THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

- Closing of nominations and election of RNA officers

-QUEST SPEAKER: Harry Schwartz, community representative of Christ Hospital, discussing their development proposals

proposal for a privately-owned, large-scale youth disco that would stay open late at night.

They enlisted the active support of councilman Joseph Rakowski and fought hard to make their case against the project at every possible step of the bureaucratic and legal process. They made sure the plan would be subject to intense scrutiny, and they backed up their opposition with some persuasive argument. Rakowski says the project has been stopped.

Although the Hilltop Neighborhood Association took a leading role, a coalition of groups representing thousands of residents opposed the project.

Attorney Bob DuVal of Jersey City deserves special credit for representing opponents of Teen Nation without charging for his time. Assisted by his wife Liza, serving as his law clerk, he is still making plans for an appellate court challenge on whether a disco is included as part of the "recreation" zoning use. He also has urged some reforms in the way the City handles its zoning use cases.

He showed how important a lawyer can be in such a controversy.

There's a certain inertia involved when anything requires a governmental approval. as a result, if you're opposing something that hasn't gone into operation you're considerably more likely to succeed than would you be when you're trying to get rid of or change something already in operation. And residents of a neighborhood should take care to choose carefully what they oppose.

But the basic lesson of the power of a community to unite for effective action should inspire others.

RNA LETTERS TO OUR MAYOR

Dear Mayor McCann,

I am writing to you regarding a situation that has grown totally intolerable and one which your Police Department cannot seem to control. I own two buildings in the Heights section of Jersey City. One is on Palisade Avenue and the other is on Ogden Avenue. Young delinquent and dangerous people gather at the Palisade Avenue and Hutton Street. Drugs and alcohol are openly sold and consumed. Palisade Liquor sells to minors and is open till 1:00 AM every night. Recently, one of my tenants at 412 Palisade Avenue, which is across the street, was mugged late one night. A gang of 10 to 12 men who were loitering in front of the liquor store knocked her down and stole her purse in font of the apartment building. The men first began by throwing cans at her and taunting her. My tenants have complained to me and the police repeatedly. Nothing has been done to end this loitering. The people of this neighborhood are frightened. When I lived there two years ago I did not worry about these things. Now, as a man, I fear going to my own building at night.

A police officer sometimes walks the beat at Franklin and Palisade because the drug problem in that neighborhood had become so bad. The officer's presence there caused that bad element to move to my corner. This didn't solve the problem; it only changed the location. The Police told me that this walking officer can only cover Franklin Avenue from Palisade Avenue to Central Avenue. We need another officer patrolling the area on Palisade Avenue from Hutton Street to Riverview Park. The whole length of Palisade Avenue from the A &P (at Woods Place) to Bowers Street also needs coverage; and this, at a time when the City plans to lay off 50 police officers. Does this make sense?

You have increased my taxes to an unbelievable extent and we receive nothing in return. It is becoming more difficult to manage my building. Why should I not abandon the building and let it fall to Jersey City. Now when a tenant leaves I have a very difficult time renting the apartment because of the area. I try and keep my building as clean and safe as I possibly can. I may no longer live in the Heights but everything gets repaired quickly and I have never had a complaint against me regarding that building.

Even three or four years ago the neighborhood may not have been great, but it wasn't dangerous. Most people can deal with rough around the edges, but not with fearing for their safety. I never felt intimidated walking through the streets. It was a lot quieter until the drug dealers moved in. The streets are filthy, the school system is worthless, and the overall quality of life is deteriorating rapidly. The City encourages people to purchase housing and to rehabilitate the existing stock but offers nothing in return. There is no incentive. My money is better spent in the suburbs where the taxes are not very different and I am give something in return. In essence, the small building owners of this town are getting screwed.

And now you want to lay off more cops. WHERE DOES ALL THE MONEY GO? Don't blame it on your predecessor because you have been here before. That is the biggest copout and the usual answer from our illustrious Hudson County politicians. Nothing has improved, only deteriorated. There are more office buildings but nothing to show for them. WHAT DO YOU SPEND OUR MONEY ON? Hey, for a change, why not try management control and efficiency.

The corner of Palisade Avenue and Hutton Street has become the worse in all the Heights. Why? We want answers and action immediately. My only regret is that I cannot be there to make your lives miserable.

Richard La Posta and Karen Kaminski

Dear Mayor McCann:

I moved to Jersey City four years ago from South Jersey and I must say that I was surprised that a real neighborhood spirit existed of people working together to make Jersey City a desirable place to live. There is a real dedication of the people in my neighborhood, a

mixture of both long time and recent residents.

Recently I was dismayed when I heard from an owner of a condominium in my building who had moved to California due to job loss in this area. After trying to sell his unit and having problems due to the soft market, he decided to rent it in order to make his mortgage payments. After securing tenants who were ready to sign a lease, he was told by the prospective tenants that they had called the Jersey City police to ask if it was safe living here. Evidently they were told by the person with whom they spoke that it is not and added that even "I do not live here". Needless to say he lost the tenant and had to wait several months to secure someone else.

It is appalling to me that City civil servants being paid by the taxes paid by this condominium owner would speak negatively towards the City that feeds them. If the taxes get any higher, everyone will leave and there will be no need for the police or anyone else.

I applaud your desire to force the issue that people working in the City should live in the City. Maybe, then they will try to improve it and make Jersey City a better place for everyone to live.

Dennis Elgrim

(The following is a reply to Mr. Elgrim's letter.)

Dear Mr. Elgrim,

Thanks for your letter. I agree. Jersey City is a city of neighborhoods, with neighbors who care about one another and where they live. We enjoy a unique combination of the friendliness of a small town and the benefits of urban living.

I appreciate your support of the residency requirement. We need our employees to stay in Jersey City, raise families in Jersey City, buy homes in Jersey City and take a vested interest in our neighborhoods.

It is refreshing to hear a word of support.

Mayor Gerald McCann

UPDATE: N.J. TRANSIT WATERFRONT TRANSPORTATION PROJECT

(Last month RNA printed a statement by COATS, (the Committee on Alternative Transportation Solutions) a coalition of environmental, advocacy and neighborhood organizations, arguing against the proposed interim busway and advocating a light rail system for the N.J. waterfront . This month, we are printing excerpts from Martin Robins, director of the N.J. Transit Waterfront Transportation Office in support of the interim busway.)

The Phase I Waterfront Transitway project is the State's proposed plan to meet the immediate and short-term travel demands of the developing Waterfront. Costing $27 million, of which New Jersey will provide the local share of about $7 million, Phase I consists of a series of spot improvements along the Hudson River for 7.5 miles, from the vicinity of Liberty State Park in Jersey City , in the south, top Edgewater, Bergen County, in the north.

Central among the proposed projects comprising Phase I are upgraded or newly-designed transit hubs at strategic Waterfront sites. These hubs will be located where the north-south Transitway intersects east-west facilities, such as PATH stations, Hoboken Terminal and the Port Imperial Ferry in Weehawken. Two of the hubs include vertical connections from communities along the Palisades Ridge in North Hudson to employment centers and Waterfront transit at the base of the Ridge. Also included are several short exclusive busways to speed transit trips and avoid traffic congestion, a park-ride off the New Jersey Turnpike Extension in the vicinity of Liberty State Park, provision for a Staten Island/Exchange Place ferry and local road improvements to enhance transit service.

These improvements can be implemented over a one to three year period at limited capital cost. Utilizing the existing North Busway and River Road in northern Hudson and south Bergen counties, Phase I establishes a continuous north-south public transportation corridor along the Hudson river for the first time, filling the gap in the area's transit network.

These improvements will be designed not to preclude construction of the Waterfront's long-range transit improvements.....NJ Transit has already taken steps to insure an alignment will be available for the State's long term investment. In June 1989, the statewide public transportation corporation entered into an agreement with Conrail to purchase the River Line, a rail freight right of way that runs from near Tonnelle Avenue in North Bergen through the Palisades and along the Hudson River from Weehawken to Jersey City, passing around the western perimeter of Hoboken. More than $50 million is being spent for the River Line and for moving Conrail to the Northern Branch. This clearly demonstrates the State's commitment to provide a long-term investment on the waterfront.

A very important psychological by product of the Phase I improvements is the opportunity to create increased reliance on transit in the early stages of development. This new transit routing also will demonstrate that a commitment exists for a more expensive, higher capacity long range investment, such as light rail. Traffic congestion, along with its attendant air pollution, is already evident as a result of development on the Weehawken and Jersey City Waterfronts.

The Phase I provides a timely answer to future office tenants that their employees will have transit access from virtually any origin west of the Hudson to Waterfront job sites.

Another plus of Phase I is the benefit it provides for local residents' north-south transit trips. At present because of a lack of public transit from these areas, many residents must either use their cars or take time-consuming, circuitous transit trips.

A Waterfont Distributor bus route, linking the

transit hubs and using the improved facilities, will be an essential operating complement to the physical projects. As to the concern expressed over the short-range reliance on buses, these are the primary public transit vehicle available in this time span to provide the services required. Our Office estimates only a modest growth in the number of buses that will be operating on the transitway for the next half dozen years.

With respect to concerns about air pollution caused by buses, tighter controls and monitoring of Diesel-powered buses will be in place as a result of congress' 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act. These new amendments, which take effect as early as 1993, impose stringent requirements for urban buses and call for a ninety percent reduction in the permitted emissions of particulates by new and overhauled buses.

Communities, such as Hoboken, can expect even greater traffic growth as development continues. This traffic growth can lead to congestion and even gridlock during the morning and evening rush hours. Without improved transit more land is likely to be absorbed for low value parking, resulting in less land available for high value ratables and encouraging more pollution-generating auto commuting.

Now is the time to start shaping commuter travel habits. A new and different attitude toward the use of public transit must be initiated. Phase I provides us with the improvements to lure people from their cars onto transit vehicles and prove that higher capacity transit is necessary as development proceeds.

CONRAD'S CORNER

About every two months our Light Rail, Lionel Train enthusiasts come up with another light rail line for the waterfront. This one costing a mere 80 million dollars to build and no doubt a million a year to run. It would have to be elevated because there is at present no right of way. It would even be better to run buses if the roadway is to be shared with automobile traffic, but then traffic would be bogged down as it is now on Washington street, Hoboken where the same buses could continue on tp Weehawken, Hartz Mountain, and Imperatore ferries. But why worry about pollution from buses, they run so infrequent you have to get a taxi or run out and buy a car if you want to get around in Hudson county. Making connections from one bus line to another, forget it unless you don't mind standing out in the cold for an hour. I doubt if it would even pay to run a bus from the Lackawanna Terminal along the waterfront to Weehawken with the kind of passenger service Transport of New Jersey gives us now.

The only reason for all this development talk is that politicians keep hoping that some new construction will lower their taxes. the opposite has taken place, taxes are now so high they are bankrupting the middle class senior citizen homeowner. We still have staffs of high paid workers trying to entice developers to build. If we got rid of them our taxes could be cut 20%.

Rerouting the 87 bus line, so that instead of going to the Hoboken Terminal from the Paterson Plank road along Observer Highway , it would turn into Hendersen Street along the Highway to Newport, passing Waldbaum's, the Shopping Mall, the Pavonia Station then south along Marin Boulevard to Hendersen Street, City Hall, and terminating at Exchange Place, all for one fare instead of the two with a transfer. It would revive real estate in the northeast section of the Heights. Let's give it a try. The present route to Hoboken would run only during the rush hours.

If taxes in Jersey City were cut 20%, workers along the waterfront would be glad to live in the Heights, but since they are even higher than Montclair all the waterfront workers head straight for the suburbs to a haven without crime.

HEIGHTS COALITION OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND BLOCK ASSOCIATIONS

The Heights Coalition met Monday, February 25th. Some of the new business discussed was the Coalition sponsoring of a neighborhood clean-up, especially around the Central Avenue business district. Susan Kornutick of the new #28 Block Association, has volunteered to co-ordinate this with the City and the Central Ave. businesses.

The Coalition will also participate in the national Earth Day festivities to take place this summer. And last but not least, we welcomed a new member to the Coalition: the Terrace, Liberty & Columbia Avenues Association, or "TLC" is headed up by Louis De Stefano. Till next time!

Maria Tuzzo
RNA representative to HCNBA

THANKS FOR A JOB WELL DONE!

Riverview Neighborhood Association would like to take a moment to thank a community leader who is retiring. Captain James Galvin of the North District Police will retire after approximately thirty years as a Jersey City police officer. His last day on duty was February 28th.

Captain Galvin has been in charge of the North District for about six years. During that time he demonstrated an ability and sensitivity, under sometimes adverse conditions, to help maintain and support our community. He was always available, patient with our complaints and willing to go the extra distance to give our neighborhood a feeling of security. The problems of not enough police and a large, unmanageable territory to patrol were issues that were beyond his control and were constantly limiting his potential to manage this community. But he was a dedicated cop and a decent human being who understood the fears and concerns of the citizens. He will be missed.

HELP SUPPORT RNA

Don't forget to pay your annual membership

dues for 1991. It only costs $3.00 a year to enjoy the benefits of joining Riverview Neighborhood Association. Official membership entitles people living within RNA's boundaries - voting privileges on all matters that are brought before the association at the monthly general meetings (the boundaries are Bowers Street on the north, Palisade Avenue on the west, Ogden Avenue on the east and Cuneo Place on the south).For people living outside the area, membership dues entitle them to receive the RNA monthly newsletter and attend the monthly meetings as active non-voting participants. In general, monies collected from the dues help defray the cost of mailing our monthly newsletter, pay for refreshments, stamps for correspondence and other important or unexpected expenses incurred in running our Association.

Make your check payable to Riverview Neighborhood Association and mail it to 232 Ogden Avenue, J.C., N.J. 07307. Be sure to include your return address so that your membership card can be sent to you. Better yet, bring it in person to our next meeting, Friday, March 8th at the Harbor View Health Care Center.

JERSEY CITY MUSEUM SPRING CLASSES AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

QUILTING (Instruction for traditional quilting techniques for all levels)
$20 ($15 for members)
4 classes, Saturdays, 10 am -12 pm
March 2, 9, 23, April 6

FIGURE DRAWING (Life drawing for artists with previous experience. No instruction; model provided.)
$45 ($40 for members)
10 sessions
Tuesday evenings 5:45 - 7:45 pm
March 5 through May 7, 1991

STORYTELLING WITH LISA LIPKIN
(Enjoy an afternoon of tales drawn from the rich history of Hudson County. Ms. Lipkin uses the folklore and legends of the area to bring long forgotten characters and events to life in this one-hour program.)
Saturday, March 9th 2 pm
Free and open to the public.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL: 47-4380.

MARCH.....

THE MONTH THAT THE DEEP FREEZE WILL BE OVER...
AND OUR THOUGHTS WILL BE WITH JELLY BEANS, BUNNIES, EASTER FINERY.....
AND THE LADIES WILL BE THINKING OF THEIR PRETTY EASTER BONNETS....

SPRING IS IN THE AIR, SPRING IS EVERYWHERE.....
HAPPY EASTER TO ALL!

Madeline Tuzzo Rea

JERSEY CITY RECYCLING

HERE IS THE OFFICIAL LIST OF WHAT IS RECYCLABLE IN JERSEY CITY:

PAPER: NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, CARDBOARD, GIFT BOXES, JUNK MAIL, SCHOOL PAPER, OFFICE PAPER, COMPUTER PAPER, TELEPHONE BOOKS

PLASTICS: SODA BOTTLES, MILK CONTAINERS, WATER CONTAINERS, FOOD BOTTLES

GLASS: SODA BOTTLES, BEER BOTTLES, FOOD JARS
(NO PLASTIC AND/OR GLASS HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL OR DETERGENT CONTAINERS)

CANS: ALUMINUM, TIN, STEEL
(NO CHEMICAL OR PAINT CANS)

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD PICK UP DAY IS WEDNESDAY. REMEMBER, PAPER PRODUCTS SHOULD BE SEPARATE BUT GLASS, PLASTIC AND METAL CAN BE GROUPED TOGETHER.

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PAUL M. DE PASCALE
HUDSON COUNTY PROSECUTOR

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IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING IN THE RNA NEWSLETTER, PLEASE MAIL (2) OF YOUR BUSINESS CARDS AND A CHECK [EITHER $10/ONE MONTH OR $60/NINE MONTHS] TO RNA, 232 OGDEN AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N.J. 07307.

SEE YOU AT OUR NEXT RNA MEETING ON FRIDAY, MARCH 8TH, AT 7:30 P.M.

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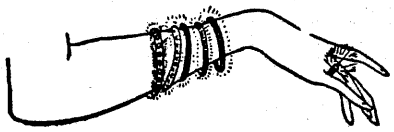

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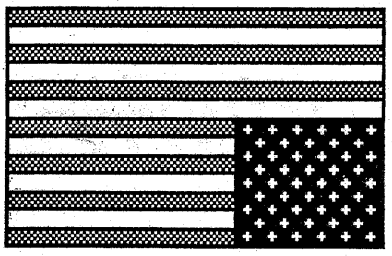

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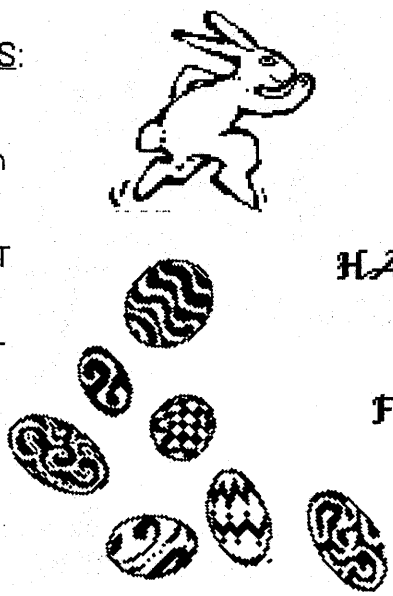

MARCH CELEBRATIONS

HAPPY SAINT PATRICK'S DAY (MARCH 17TH)

FIRST DAY OF SPRING
(MARCH 20TH)

HAPPY EASTER
(MARCH 31ST)